Reflection

Rui Xuan 4122836

In this reflection I would like to explain for the results of the research and design in the graduation phase. The aim of the reflection is to look back and see whether the approach worked, to understand the "how and why", and subsequently to learn from this. The reflection will contain an answer to the question of how and why the approach did or did not work, and to what extent.

There will be 4 aspects included in the following part.

1. The relationship between the theme of the studio and the case study chosen within this location
The first semester of the design studio is part of the Vertical City Asia Competition. The main theme of the competition is "Everyone Ages" last year. The competition encourages new positive approaches to aging society that identify opportunities for maintaining capacities and well-being over the life course.

In the next semester, the “Open ended city” was selected as our basic masterplan. In this proposal, The Hybrid centers will serve as the heart of each community, supporting the education of the children, giving more opportunities to the lives of the elderly and mobilizing the women to work if they so wish. One of these hybrid community center was chosen as my design project. The Hybrid centers create more opportunities for the elderly to be well integrated in society, as they are given responsibilities in providing day care services and programs for children.
The community center will be located in a new district in the city of Seoul, a wild area east of the old city center, which is gradually becoming part of the city according to the new masterplan. The new district has a completely different urban fabric from the one that formed the foundation for Seoul, which can still be recognised by the irregular layout of its roads and the small scale of the traditional buildings. This new neighborhood is mainly residential, and the community center will create a space for various groups of the area; youth, women, family and children.

2. The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen in this framework
In the first semester, we did a lot of research and use the collective research as a tool to develop strategies for the project. Although the final masterplan is different, the research part is useful for the next architecture design phase. When we tried to make transition from the master plan design to the building design, we already put the position of architecture within a broader social, cultural, political, and economic context.

My project development based on careful observation of the public space in the old city. The whole program is divided into a serial of small individual functional spaces which will be utilized by various types of open spaces. Its form escapes the order and structure of the district’s layout and the architectural design of the context, offering an articulated composition of buildings, each one portrayed with the same style but expressed differently. From the outside, the community center looks like a integrated building, although it is comprised of smaller-scale blocks brought together unified by the regular sizes. When you enter, it turns out to be a miniature city, with hints of the traditional Seoul that – apart from some traces – no longer exists in this district.

3. The relationship between research and design
Research enables and supports the design through the entire course of development, stimulating the mind and thereby increasing its scope. It influence the design from urban level to building level, even to the building technology level.
In urban level, the Korean culture is integrated into the community center. The location is designed in the sense of the center of a new developed neighborhood. The city will influence the building and the building can benefit the city. Korean traditional public space is created in the building to be more adaptable to the surrounding neighborhood. The location perform in a functional way for the visitors, employees and people work or live in the neighborhood. In building level, after careful analysis, urban restriction is made for the location to define the height, green space ratio, FAR, and so on. Research of different case studies helped to define the program. Relaxed and friendly atmosphere in this building is created to fit to elderly people. In the Building technology part, research is mainly related to the facade and materials used in other public buildings.

4. The relationship between the project and the wider social context
The people who come here are given the possibility of an experience that shakes off the alienation of the new city, prompting them into action, into dialogue. I hope them experiencing what they might achieve in a small town, such as numerous possibilities of destination, wandering and meeting with unexpected. In the other word, the project create a place of social interaction and human care for the users.

You can move from block to block based on familiarity or simply randomly, drawn by the perspective framed by one of the many portals on the ground level or up high on the facades. The wide range of cultural moments will take place in the open-air theatre, the library, the courtyard, the plaza and the lane. The memory of traditional townscape scale is reconstructed here.

All in all looking back at the methodology followed through the year I can state that it has been a very positive and very helpful experience. The method used allowed for very good work structure, a thorough exploration of options and for moments of evaluation and educated decision making. Even though I am not happy with some aspects of the process that I personally went through I believe that by thinking back those weak points I can concentrate on eradicating them and thus be more efficient in the future.